

For immediate release
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USIBWC SIGNS CONTRACT FOR BORDER SANITATION PROJECT

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has entered into a contract with Bajagua, LLC for development of a wastewater treatment plant in Tijuana, Baja California. The contract is consistent with Public Law 106-457, known as the Tijuana River Valley Estuary and Beach Cleanup Act, as amended by Public Law 108-425; Minute 311 of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC); the Tijuana Master Plan; a court order requiring the USIBWC to complete the sanitation project by September 30, 2008; and the USIBWC's Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Clean Water Act Compliance, which identified the Bajagua Project as the preferred alternative. As authorized by the public law, which Congress passed in 2000, and in order to expedite completion of the project in compliance with the court order, the USIBWC entered into a sole source contract with Bajagua. Competitive procedures applicable in the United States and Mexico will be used for engineering, construction, and operation of the new plant.

The USIBWC currently operates the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego, which provides advanced primary treatment of 25 million gallons per day (mgd) of wastewater from Tijuana, Mexico. The treated effluent is then discharged through the South Bay Ocean Outfall (SBOO) into the Pacific Ocean 3.5 miles off the coast of Imperial Beach, California. In order to comply with applicable laws and permits, the USIBWC is required to provide secondary treatment. Under the contract, Bajagua will construct at its own expense a wastewater treatment plant in Tijuana. Effluent from the SBIWTP will be sent to the Tijuana plant for secondary treatment and then discharged through the SBOO. This alternative would also provide for treatment of an additional volume of 34 million gallons per day of raw sewage from Tijuana. Once the new treatment plant becomes

operational, the United States will pay Bajagua for sewage treatment services, subject to the availability of federal appropriations. The estimated first year cost after commencement of plant operations is \$29 million to \$39 million, depending on subcontractor costs to build and operate the plant. Annual charges thereafter will depend on variable operations and maintenance (O & M) expenses such as power, a major component of O & M costs.

“This contract is an important milestone in improving the sanitation infrastructure at the San Diego-Tijuana border. The project will more than double the amount of sewage currently treated at the international plant and it will provide a higher level of treatment,” said Acting U.S. Commissioner Carlos Marin.

Construction and operation of the proposed Mexican facility will require the concurrence of the government of Mexico, compliance with all applicable requirements of Mexican law, and the obtaining of all necessary permits and approvals from relevant regulatory authorities in both countries. The IBWC will convene a Binational Technical Committee to coordinate aspects of the project involving Mexico, including site selection, treatment technology, and other details.

Additional information about the project is available in the SEIS on the USIBWC web page at:
<http://www.ibwc.state.gov/SBIWTPFinalSEIS.pdf>.

For more information:

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